Post-Rockwell Ameri can Nazis Lying Low

By Hank Burchard
Washington Post Staff Writer

In the year since George Lincoln Rockwell was murdered, his American Nazi Party has shrunk from a small band of noisy activists to a smaller group of quiet propagandists.

But the party, renamed the National Socialist White People's Party shortly before Rockwell's slaying, shows little sign of the outright collapse that some predicted would follow the death of the late commander.

At the time Rockwell was gunned down outside an Arlington laundromat in August, 1967, the party had perhaps 100 members, two or three dozen of them in the Washington area and the rest scattered in "branch offices" in New York, Chicago, Dallas and Oakland, Calif.

The satellites have now been closed down, and the remaining active members, about 16, now operate from new offices at 2507 N. Franklin rd., near the Arlington Court House.

Unfriendly sources say the 16 are all that are left after dropouts, while the party says they are the elite who survived a winnowing process. Both agree on the number.

In any case, the party is occupyng the fanciest quarters in its 11-year history, a substantial masonry building with wall-to-wall carpeting.

A handsome Aryan fellow clad in khaki and armed with Mace and a .38 caliber revolver acts as receptionist. He's very polite, though uncommunicative.

Money never was much of a problem to Rockwell, who received continual dribbles of cash from all over the country and occasional large sums from wealthy rightwingers known in the hate trade as "fat cats."

The party apparently still is getting money from such sources and is doing a steady business in Nazi emblems and a wide variety of racist pamphlets and stickers.

A schism — of a type that probably caused Rockwell more trouble than any other single thing — has developed into a complete split within the party.

Rockwell used to call it "the problem of reconciling my thinkers, my intellectuals, and my doers, my strong men of action."

An FBI agent described it as friction between the weirdos and the rednecks. The weirdos like to spin dreams about ruling the world. The rednecks want to go break heads."

However the two factions are characterized, the former now is grouped around Mathias Koehl in Arlington and the latter around Karl Allen of Alexandria, late of the White Citizens Council, whose wing calls itself the "White Party."

The Arlington group busies itself with producing reams of literature, ranging from crude broadsides and reprints of that ancient hoax, "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion," to scholarly-looking quarterlies.

The Alexandria group is not much heard from, although Allen is doing what he can to further the presidential campaign of George Wallace.

Since Rockwell's coffin was turned away from the national cemetery at Culpeper, Va., because his mourners refused to shed their swastika insignia, the Arlington group has virtually halted the public picketing and demonstrations their departed commander so loved.

The party explains that the "publicity phase" of the plan to take over the United States and the world is now past, and the "building phase" is now under way.

Current operations, it is said, involve the recruitment and training of cadres of leaders who will form the nucleus for the third, "active phase," when Koehl or some party member becomes President.

There is no definite timetable for the takeover of the United States. Rockwell hoped "der Tag" would be Election Day, 1972, but the party is now more modest.

"Certain economic and social conditions will have to develop before we can move," one of Koehl's chief planners said.

Rockwell's ashes still repose in an urn kept under guard in a secret place. A Federal suit to force the U.S. Army to allow burial with appropriate neo-Nazi honors has not yet been set for trial.

John Patler, the former Nazi captain convicted of murdering Rockwell, is free on bond awaiting hearings on his appeal.